



Data Points

CWHS

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

One way to reduce the number of deaths due to breast cancer is to detect the disease at an early, more treatable stage. While mammography is not always 100% accurate, it is an effective early-stage screening method which can detect a cancer up to several years before it can be felt on examination. The American Cancer Society and the California Department of Health Services recommend that women 40 years and older be regularly screened for breast cancer by having a clinical breast exam and a mammogram once a year.

Scientific studies have shown that barriers to mammography, such as lack of economic resources, disproportionately affect low income women.¹ It is therefore important to examine mammography among California women by income status in order to identify populations which need to be addressed by public health programs.

The 2000 California Women's Health Survey asked women if they ever had a mammogram, and how long it had been since they had their last mammogram. Respondents who ever had a mammogram could answer that their last mammogram was within the past one, two, three, or five years, or over five years ago. The analysis is based on 2,273 women ages 40 and older participating in the survey. Women who reported being

previously diagnosed with breast cancer (only 5% of all women surveyed who ever had a mammogram) were included. Low income is defined as having a household income equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and higher income is defined as having a household income greater than 200% of the FPL.

- Of low income women, 86% reported having a mammogram at some point in their lives, compared to 92% of higher income women.
- A greater disparity exists between low and higher income women in reported regular mammography. Of higher income women, 64% reported having their last mammogram within the past year, while 53% of low income women reported having a mammogram within the past year.

The California Department of Health Services is working to close the economic gap in mammography screening rates. Cancer Detection Section programs such as the Breast Cancer Early Detection Program (BCEDP) and Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provide breast cancer screening and diagnostic services to uninsured and underinsured women of low income.

¹ O'Malley MS, Earp JAL, Hawley ST, Schell MJ, Mathews HF, Mitchell J. The association of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and physician recommendation for mammography: who gets the message about breast cancer screening? American Journal of Public Health. 2001;91:49-54.

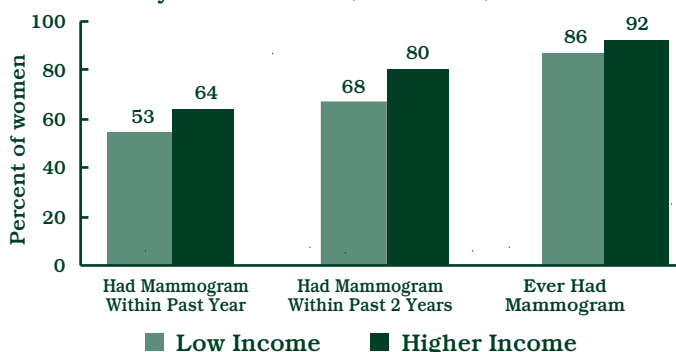
MAMMOGRAMS AMONG WOMEN AGES 40 AND ABOVE, BY INCOME STATUS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

Cancer Detection Section, California Department of Health Services

Public Health Message:

Messages for regular mammogram screening and access to services should particularly target low income women. Through outreach efforts, low income women 40 years or older who have no or limited health insurance coverage are encouraged to access breast cancer screening and diagnostic services such as that provided by the California Department of Health Services.

Mammograms Among Women Ages 40 and Above, by Income Status, California, 2000



Low Income is defined as having a household income equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and Higher Income is defined as having a household income greater than 200% of the FPL.

Issue 3, Summer 2002, Num. 22